

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for controlling the amount of time ~~which~~ a user spends connected to a data communication network, the method ~~comprising the steps of:~~

~~upon connection of a user to a data communication network, associating the user with an age group when the user connects to the data communication network determining a profile of the user by determining an age group to which the user belongs;~~

~~calculating a user's connection time that represents [[a]]at least an amount of time that said the user has spent connected-is connected to the data communication eommunications network;~~

~~-and comparing said the user's connection time with information a table which contains represents appropriate connection times which are predefined according for to different age groups of the user; and~~

~~if said connection time is greater than a maximum allowable time for the age group of said user, automatically interrupting the user's connection to said the data communication eommunications-network when the user's connection time exceeds the appropriate connection time for the user's age group.~~

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of calculating ~~said the user's~~ connection time comprises ~~the step of calculating said connection time by taking into account calculating the sum all of one or more the connections established by the user during a given time interval, said connection time being constituted by a sum of connection times of all of said connections.~~

3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2, further comprising ~~a step of taking into account a~~ calculating an amount of elapsed time elapsed between one of the user's ~~[[a]] connection connections~~ to the data communication network and a subsequent connection, ~~said and multiplying the amount of elapsed time elapsed time being at least equal to a duration of~~

~~the connection that has just ended, multiplied by a constant according to the age group of said user.~~

4. (currently amended) The method according to claim 3, further comprising authorizing an additional user connection if the product of the calculated elapsed time and the constant is not less than a duration of the subsequent connection, ~~wherein if said elapsed time is correct, a subsequent connection is authorized.~~

5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of automatically interrupting the user's connection further comprises determining whether a total sum of duration-durations of the connections established by the user during said a given time interval cannot exceed-exceeds a maximum connection time that is allowable in relation to-for the user's age group-of said user.

6. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein said table-the information representing that contains maximum allowable connection times according to the user's age group of said user is determined in advance by the provider of the services for connection to the a data communication network service provider.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 6, wherein said table-the information that contains-representing the maximum allowable connection times according to the user's age group of said user ~~can be~~ is predefined by the -user users.

8. (original) A device for controlling a time that a user spends connected to a data communications network, comprising:

means for identifying a profile of the user connected to said data communication network;

means for calculating a time for which said user is connected to said data communication network;

means for comparing said connection time with a table which contains maximum allowable connection times according to an age group of said user; means for automatically

disconnecting said user from said data communication network if said user connection time exceeds said maximum allowable connection time for the age group of said user.

9. (original) The device according to claim 8, wherein said means for calculating the time that said user spends connected to the data communication network comprise means for calculating a sum of the connection times of successive connections established by the user over a given time interval and means for calculating a time elapsed between one connection established by the user and a following connection.

10. (new) A system for controlling the amount of time a user spends connected to a data communication network, the system comprising:

a user profile that associates the user with an age group;

a connection module that references the profile when the user connects to the data communication network;

a time calculation module that calculates a user's connection time to represent at least an amount of time that the user is connected to the data communications network;

a comparison module that compares the user's connection time with a database that identifies appropriate connection times for different age groups; and

an interruption module that automatically interrupts the user's connection to the data communication network when the user's connection time exceeds the appropriate connection time for the user's age group.

11. (new) The system according to claim 10, wherein the time calculation module calculates the sum of one or more connections established by the user during a given time interval.

12. (new) The system according to claim 11, wherein the time calculation module further calculates an amount of elapsed time between one of the user's connections to the data communication network and a subsequent connection, and multiplies the amount of elapsed time by a constant according to the age group of said user.

13. (new) The system according to claim 12, further comprising an authorization module that authorizes an additional user connection if the product of the calculated elapsed time and the constant is not less than a duration of the subsequent connection.

14. (new) The system according to claim 10, wherein the interruption module further determines whether a sum of durations of connections established by the user during a given time interval exceeds a maximum connection time that is allowable for the user's age group.

15. (new) The system according to claim 14, wherein the maximum connection time according to the user's age group is determined in advance by a data communication network service provider.

16. (new) The system according to claim 15, wherein the information representing the maximum allowable connection times according to the user's age group is predefined by the user.